

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
OF  
PROPOSED LEASE AT CORALVILLE LAKE  
JOHNSON COUNTY, IOWA**

**STATEMENT OF FINDINGS**

**I. Project Description.**

A. This statement concerns a proposal by the Rock Island District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to lease the 106-acre tract at Coralville Lake, formerly leased to the Cardinal Council of Girl Scouts and known as Camp Daybreak. The purpose of the Environmental Assessment (EA) was to evaluate four alternative levels of use and development, assess the potential impacts of the alternatives, and recommend a preferred alternative for the 106-acre site.

Alternatives evaluated in the EA included:

1. Leasing the former Camp Daybreak area for group recreational use and development by a non-profit organization, at a level of use and development as proposed in the Muslim Youth Camps of America (MYCA) application;
2. Leasing the former Camp Daybreak area for group recreational use and development by a non-profit organization at a reduced level of development and use;
3. Low density recreational day use of the former Camp Daybreak area under administration by the Corps; and
4. No action-no current plans for development or lease.

B. An EA addressing impacts of the proposed project was prepared and circulated for a 45-day public review period, beginning on November 19, 2002.

**II. Public Involvement.**

A. A public scoping meeting was held on July 12, 2000. An afternoon session and an evening session were conducted. Legal ads providing public notice for the meetings were published in the Cedar Rapids Gazette on July 8, 10, 11, and 12, 2000, and Iowa City Press-Citizen on July 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12, 2000. Individual notices were sent to over 350 people on July 7, 2000. Notices were also sent to radio stations KXIC and KCJJ on July 10, 2000 to be included in their daily public service announcements.

A total of 102 people attended the public scoping meeting, with approximately 50 percent of the attendance at each of the two sessions. A total of 77 (75 percent) completed comment forms were submitted by the attendees. These comment forms were reviewed and the information therein was compiled for analysis. Most of the attendees (53 out of 77, or 69 percent) submitting comments were within a five-mile radius of the former Camp Daybreak site. In addition to local homeowners, the responders also represented local businesses, the Johnson County Board of Supervisors, environmental organizations, and interested lessees (MYCA and IO-DIS-E-CA representatives).

Based on this analysis, the majority of the comments received from the public are related to concerns that the level of use and development proposed by MYCA is excessive given the size of the project area. This was reflected in the frequently expressed concerns about traffic problems, noise levels, impacts to natural resources, impacts to local infrastructure, safety of local children, and accessibility to the site by the public.

**B.** The Corps developed a web site at the outset of the EA process, <http://www2.mvr.usace.army.mil/Daybreak/>. This web site provided information to the public about the EA, as well as providing access to all relevant project planning documents for Coralville Lake and applicable regulations governing the EA process and operations at the lake. Finally, the web site provided contact information for Corps personnel in environmental, real estate, and public affairs offices. Upon release of the EA to the public for review and comments, the EA was posted to the web. A direct link for providing public comments by email was also provided.

**C.** A copy of the EA was mailed to the appropriate federal, state, and local governing agencies, to all neighbors and to every person who requested a copy. In addition, the EA was posted on the previously established Corps web site. Finally, the Corps' Public Affairs Office issued a news release to all local media to coincide with the public review period.

### **III. Public Review Comments.**

**A.** The Public Review Period for the EA of the Proposed Lease at Coralville Lake, Johnson County, Iowa, closed on January 2, 2003. One hundred four (104) comment letters were received by the Corps of Engineers; nine (9) from governmental or other organizations and ninety five (95) from private citizens. During the comment period, the Corps also received two inquiries from Senator Grassley, forwarding constituents' concerns, and one petition with 201 signatures objecting to the lease of this federal land. In addition, the Corps received twenty-three (23) requests (one with 16 signatures) for an extension of the public comment period. The Corps and Zambrana Engineering, Inc. (ZEI) reviewed the comments received and prepared responses to all of the questions and concerns raised during the public comment period.

**B.** Comments that were received from the review of the EA are summarized in the enclosed Public Comments and Responses document, dated June 20, 2003. Responses, prepared by the Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, and Zambrana Engineering, Inc., follow each comment summary.

The decision documentation, and the summarized comments and responses, as well as all original comment letters, will be available to the public. All parties from the original distribution list plus any other individuals who submitted public comments will be notified of the availability of the decision documentation, comment letters, and responses, and locations for viewing this package. This package will be posted on the Corps' Camp Daybreak web site (<http://www2.mvr.usace.army.mil/Daybreak/>). Hard copies will also be available for review at area libraries, post offices, and at the Coralville Lake project office. A news release will coincide with the release of the decision documents.

### **IV. Additional Comments.**

**A.** Since the close of the comment period and through May 31, 2003, the Corps has received three (3) letters opposing and three (3) letters supporting the proposed lease. In addition, the Corps received six (6) congressional inquiries, forwarding constituents' concerns; five from Senator Grassley and one from Senator Harkin. The Corps also responded to a verbal request for information from Congressman Leach. No new issues were raised as a result of this correspondence.

**B.** The Corps also met with officials from the City of North Liberty, the Johnson County Board of Supervisors, and the Johnson County Planning and Zoning Department on March 25, 2003, to discuss their concerns. The Corps re-evaluated the Sugar Bottom area as a potential site for the proposed project.

After careful reconsideration, it was determined that this area did not meet the criteria established by the Corps for this proposed project at this location.

#### **V. Summary of Public Involvement and Environmental Impact Review.**

A. A variety of factors have been evaluated in order to determine the public interest in the use and development of the former Camp Daybreak site. The environmental impact review process has enabled each factor to be researched, analyzed, and addressed, and has allowed full input from the public in providing information to assist in the evaluation. This evaluation, to include the objections and concerns expressed by local elected officials, was carefully considered, weighed, and balanced against national resources and needs. No significant environmental impacts were identified from any of the alternatives evaluated and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was prepared and is included in the EA. Alternative 2, leasing the former Camp Daybreak area for group recreational use and development by a non-profit organization at a reduced level (approximately 50% reduction from Alternative 1) of development and use, is chosen as the preferred alternative for the following reasons:

- Finding of no significant impact to environment;
- Consistent with project purpose and need;
- Consistent with the Corps' Master Plan and designated land use for site;
- Has a similar size, scope, and development as the former Camp Daybreak facility, as constructed;
- Consideration of social and economic concerns to the local infrastructure and surrounding community, based on the comments received from local governments and the general public;
- Reduces impacts set forth in the EA, relative to Alternative 1.

B. As a condition of a lease, any applicant proposing the level of use described under this alternative, would be required to obtain all appropriate and applicable approvals and permits including, but not limited to, the following:

- Variance and/or permit from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) for wastewater treatment facility siting,
- Building permit from Johnson County,
- Water Quality Certification (Section 401 permit) from IDNR, and
- Section 404 permit from the Corps.

#### **VI. Summary of Findings.**

I find that the implementation of the project, as evaluated, and under the conditions set forth and as prescribed by all applicable regulations, is in the public interest. MYCA will be invited to submit a proposal consistent with the Alternative 2 level of use and development.

30 June 2003

Date



William J. Bayles  
Colonel, U.S. Army  
District Engineer